

Plenty of PD opportunities through April

Webinar: On February 28, the Nevada Adult Educators organization hosts another Webinar, free to NAE members. Jeremy Aguero will present an economic and workforce overview that addresses the diversity of Nevada.

A much quoted expert and fourth-generation Las Vegan, Jeremy is a principal analyst with Applied Analysis, a leading economic, fiscal, and policy research firm based in Las Vegas. He is one of the state's go-to experts for data and statistics on real estate and the economy. He has worked in a variety of capacities for clients in both the private and public sectors, including the City of Las Vegas, the Bureau of Land Management, the Southern Nevada Economic Conference, and the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce.

Jeremy is looking forward to questions from adult educators!

PD Day: NAE's northern "Professional Development Day" was rescheduled for Saturday, March 31 at the Siena Hotel in Reno. The registration fee is \$25 for NAE members (\$65 for nonmembers) and includes a continental breakfast and lunch. The hotel room rate is \$79 plus tax (mention "Nevada Adult Educators Conference") and there is a free airport shuttle.

The committee is arranging with nationally recognized experts to present along three strands, which will include the GED® and Career Pathways. For more information, contact Board Member Kathleen Jameson (kjameson@lyon.k12.nv.us, 775/575-3409).

Visit www.nvadulthood.org to join NAE and/or register for these professional development events!



MPAEA Conference April 11-14



Register by March 10 to ensure the best rate for the 2012 MPAEA Conference, Implementing Career Pathways in Adult Education. The pre-conference session on bridge curriculum is on Wednesday afternoon. A plethora of sessions follow through Saturday morning. Registration is online only, at www.mpaea.org; click on the conference tab.

Scholarships to fund MPAEA Conference registration are available through [Nevada Adult Educators](http://www.nvae.us). Deadline for submission is March 1. Details at <http://nvae.us/56>.

April is financial literacy month

The purpose of the "Financial Literacy Now" Initiative is to raise awareness about the critical importance of financial literacy and provide greater access to financial literacy training, services and information. The Campaign for Financial Literacy is being spearheaded by The McGraw-Hill Companies and its nonprofit partners. It targets the general public with an emphasis on supporting kindergarten through high school teachers.

At www.FinancialLitNow.org are links to resources and lesson plans on managing money, getting a loan, using debit and credit cards, planning for college, etc. The [Dictionary of Financial Terms](http://www.FinancialLitNow.org) is extensive; you can search through it for definitions that contain specific words. The videos (access from the "resources" tab) nicely demonstrate concepts such as how tax-deferred compounding helps build a nest egg. See www.facebook.com/FinancialLiteracyNow or google "financial literacy" for more resources.



Teachers share what's up at TMCC

The two articles on this page and the "Wednesday Surprise" on page 3 are reprinted with permission and much thanks from "The What's Up, Doc?" Newsletter (December 2011), produced by Sheramy Barry (sbarry@tmcc.edu) for TMCC's ABE/ESL Program.

Should educators focus on native or target language?

By Silvia Rodriguez, srodriguez@tmcc.edu.

I participated in an online study circle, "The Role of the Home Language: Asset or Barrier?" through English Language Learner University this past summer. It gave me the opportunity to discuss this topic with instructors from all over the country, as we had three audio meetings with twelve participants, teaching different levels of proficiency, from different states. The use of the native language has been a controversial topic for many years. I wanted to know if instructors still allow its use in the classrooms, in what ways, and if it can be detrimental to students acquiring a second language.



According to Huerta-Macias & Kephart (2009) a common belief is that the more the learners are exposed to the TL (target language), the faster they will acquire it. However, Macias' study found no evidence to support that belief, but a considerable body of literature that supports the opposite. In fact, Macias draws on Hudelson & Faltis (1994), who argue that the use of L1 (native language) enables learners to transfer their knowledge and join English language discussions with more confidence and understanding.

Goldenberg's study (2008) explains that the native language often is part of the ESL classroom even when the teacher is not bilingual. In homogenous groups where students speak the same language, it is possible to integrate this process by allowing students to discuss a topic in their native language, then ask that the gist of the discussion be reported in English to the class and the teacher.

A study by Condelli and Wrigley (2004) supports the idea that "students should be helped to transfer what they know in their first language to learn tasks presented in English."

We were assigned to engage learners in a discussion about the ways they use their home language in learning English and the ways we use the language of the learner in our classroom. We all agreed that the use of native language is an asset, but due to the multilingual groups we teach and class policies, we cannot use the students' language in our classes all the time. However, if some grammar concepts were not fully learned we can help our students using their L1 when possible. They will also feel more motivated if their native language is valued.

Abby reports on linguistic discrimination

By Abby Penny, who taught ESL to adults at GBC and TMCC.

In February she moves to South Korea to teach English to elementary students.

During the Northern Nevada Chapter's CATESOL Conference in Reno in November, I attended an afternoon session on "linguicism" (linguistic discrimination). Here are my very brief notes on what we, as teachers, need to keep in mind.

- ✓ We need to understand the role of linguistic diversity. Students who use more lexically correct English than colloquial English are seen as more polite, more clean, and more responsible.
- ✓ We need to expose all students to linguistic variation (regardless of the students' ages).
- ✓ Teachers must understand that saying or believing "standard English is better than other varieties" is not true.
- ✓ We cannot say that English is not as good as it used to be because:
 - language is not some sort of fragile object to be protected;
 - flexibility in a language is an asset, not a cause for concern; and
 - teaching students about the history of English helps students understand why language changes.

We should teach our students communicative competence (regardless of what form of English they're using, learning, or used to) and we must expose our students to multiple kinds of English, including different accents, different dialects, and regional slang.

A follow-up Website to check out is: "Do you speak American?" at www.pbs.org/speak.

English Language Learner University is a free professional development portal for adult ESOL educators. Visit <http://ell-u.org> to access current online offerings.

Let's flip it!

In the flipped classroom, what used to be class work (the "lecture") is done at home, typically via videos and interactive lessons, before the class meets. What used to be homework (assigned problems) is now done in the classroom, which now becomes a place to work through problems, advance concepts, and engage in collaborative learning. By flipping the class, all aspects of instruction can be rethought to best maximize the scarcest learning resource — time.

The idea began with Colorado science teachers Jonathon Bergmann and Aaron Sams in 2006-2007 and hit the Internet circuit with a TED lecture by Salman Khan in March 2011.

Las Vegas' [Community Multicultural Center](#) began flipping in January, using the online GED Academy as home study; teachers facilitate discussions in the face-to-face classes. Contact Lucy Castro, cathieluz@hotmail.com, 702/434-6858 for more information on CMC's experience with flipping.

Additional information from innovative educators:

- Salman Khan presents "Let's Use Video to Reinvent Education" on TED (<http://nvae.us/51>).
- Aaron Sams and Jonathon Bergmann discuss [How the Flipped Classroom Is Radically Transforming Learning](#) at <http://nvae.us/5h>.
- Sams, winner of the 2009 Presidential Award for Excellence for Math and Science Teaching, discusses [The Flipped Class: Shedding light on the confusion, critique, and hype](#) at <http://nvae.us/5g>.

"The Wednesday Surprise" works well for ESL students

By Somi Yun, somi40@yahoo.com

The Wednesday Surprise is a children's book written by Eve Bunting. I hope all the ESL students at TMCC will one day be able read this book and share it with their families. It is about family literacy and can also be connected with setting goals. (Age doesn't matter in setting goals!)

It's a lovely story with a surprising twist. My students and their children loved reading it. (At my students' reading level, they can't understand everything so I told them to ask their children to read it for them.) Here are some of my students' comments:

1. Thank you, teacher. You told me to read this book and go to library. Before, when you say go to a library, I know I want to go but I always forgot or busy. But this time I really went to the library.
2. Teacher! I liked the story and my daughter loved it. Can I borrow it again from you one more time?
3. Teacher! The book was not there. So, I asked the lady to hold the book for me and the lady at the library asked me, "Is this book for your child?" So, I said, "No, it's for me. I want to study English." The lady said, "Good for you!" Then I talked to the lady. (*She made her own opportunity to practice English!*)
4. Thank you! Now, I think about my goals every day when I wake up in the morning.
5. Oh. I didn't know I can hold books at the library. Now I will try!

Where to find videos:

- www.khanacademy.org: more than 2,700 videos and more than 275 practice exercises.
- www.commoncraft.org: videos that cleverly explain current, common issues, such as borrowing money, electing a U.S. President, social media, etc.

Why YouTube matters

Marc Prensky, education consultant and author of *Teaching Digital Natives*, presents some innovative ideas in [Why YouTube matters: Why it is so important, why we should all be using it, and why blocking it hurts our kids' education](#). The 12-page paper provides a new perspective on the meaning of communication and the role of textual literacy in life and education.

"What many people, particularly educators, often forget (or ignore) is that writing and reading — although they have enjoyed great success and primacy for several hundred years — are very artificial and unnatural ways to communicate, store, and retrieve information," he wrote. "A large part of our population has already switched to media easier than reading and writing for almost everything, as speaking and listening are much more native to the human brain.

"Should we continue to struggle to teach reading and writing to the great percentage of students, or should we focus on teaching clear communication of ideas through media that are easier to use?"

Interesting food for thought! Access the paper at (<http://nvae.us/5j>).

This professional development project is a leadership activity funded by a grant from the Nevada State Department of Education, Workforce Investment Act, Title II (Adult Education and Family Literacy). There is no discrimination or denial of participation on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion or religious creed, national origin, sexual orientation, ancestry, or disability.

Making the most of your time at conference

Ever feel overwhelmed by all the sessions, activities, people, and resources at a conference? There is often so much to see, do, and learn, we're exhausted by the end ... and can't find or remember what was really important to us. This idea from Pennsylvania may help!

Adult educators are encouraged to keep a "Conference Learning Log" to help them reflect on what they learned and prioritize action items. The idea comes from Stephen D. Brookfield's *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*, pages 54-58. Brookfield writes, "A conference learning log can help us focus on what we can draw from conference attendance that will be helpful to our teaching. Whenever we notice something that engages or destroys our interest, or that affirms or insults us, we can jot the details down."

Carry a small memo pad, booklet, or electronic device around with you in which you can jot down notes on anything that captures your attention about the educational processes in which you're involved. When you notice something that strikes you as important or significant, note the following details:

- Briefly describe the event — when and where it occurred, who was involved, and what it was that made it significant.
- If it was a positive event, note what it was that made it so positive and those things that you do in your own teaching that you think might induce the same reaction in your students.
- If it was a negative event, note what it was that so depressed, annoyed, demeaned, or bored you and those things that you do in your own teaching that you think might induce the same reaction in your students.
- Also capture any thoughts you have on what the person or people involved could have done differently that would have avoided inducing this reaction in you.
- Finally, on the basis of your responses to the other items, note any lessons that you think this experience has for your own practice as a teacher. What might you do differently, add, eliminate, or rethink in your own teaching because of what you've just experienced as a learner?

